

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

*August 28, 2020*

Secretary Sonny Perdue  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

We write to express concern over new requirements and timelines for vendors in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). These new policies risk leaving hundreds of thousands of people each week without access to the products which have served to help buoy the emergency food system in these challenging times.

Over the past few months, CFAP has been successful in providing assistance to farmers and ranchers to maintain the integrity of our food supply chain, while also ensuring that those who are suffering from food insecurity have access to fresh food. Further, these partnerships have allowed those with specific dietary requirements (including those who observe kosher and halal) to have increased access since traditional food pantries cannot always accommodate their needs.

We are concerned, however, that USDA has changed the contracting process to:

- Require contract holders to be re-authorized while pushing back application and decision timelines, which will delay access for those who rely on contractors who provide foods that are acceptable to the kosher and halal communities;
- Create new box requirements emphasizing mixed boxes of meat, dairy, and produce; and
- Indicate that there may not be sufficient funding to maintain existing contracts.

We strongly urge USDA to act quickly to assess the applications for current contract holders on a rolling basis so that there are no administrative delays that keep those who are hungry from receiving food.

We are also worried that USDA's new emphasis on mixed boxes containing dairy, meat, and produce may result in there not being appropriate options for communities who require kosher food.

We look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible to learn how USDA intends to mitigate both of these concerns.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

/s/ Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

/s/ Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress

/s/ Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress

/s/ Joseph D. Morrelle  
Member of Congress

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

/s/ Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress

/s/ Max Rose      /s/ Jerrold Nadler      /s/ Yvette D. Clarke      /s/ Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress    Member of Congress    Member of Congress    Member of Congress